



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

March 16, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: BRIAN FARBER

PHONE: (202) 225-3826

BISHOP TO SENIORS: PAY ATTENTION TO MEDICARE PART D DEADLINE OR PAY REPUBLICAN “DRUG TAX”

As May 15 Deadline Approaches, Seniors Are Warned to Investigate Benefit

Washington, DC – Congressman Tim Bishop issued a reminder today that the deadline to sign up for the Republican’s Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program is fast approaching. Once the May 15 deadline passes, seniors who have not enrolled in the plan will be subject to a 1% per month lifetime penalty on their premium if they choose to enroll in the drug plan at a later date. For example, were a senior to enroll 15 months past May 15, the recipient would pay an additional 15% lifetime ‘tax’ on his or her premium.

“Seniors have been subjected to this poorly constructed drug plan and are being blackmailed into signing up under the threat of a stiff lifetime penalty,” Bishop stated. “Although I voted against this plan, I believe that helping seniors cope with the confusion must be my priority.”

Bishop opposed the plan that created the new program because he believes the drug benefit is inadequate, overly complex, and is a boon to big drug companies, but he believes it is important that his constituents have the necessary information to make the best decision for them.

Bishop has been fighting to give Long Island’s seniors more time to make an informed decision. Bishop cosponsored the Medicare Informed Choice Act, which will provide seniors and individuals with disabilities an additional six months to choose from the dozens of plans offered by various companies.

Seniors who have not yet enrolled in the Medicare Part D program and needs assistance in choosing the plan that is right for them may call the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services at 1-800-Medicare.

“I may not agree with this prescription drug benefit, but it is my obligation to help seniors wade through the bureaucracy that they now face.”

###